



Community Newsletter

TOWN OF MESILLA

February 2012

A Message From Our Mayor

Dear Mesilla Residents:

Abelated Happy New Year and Happy 100th Birthday New Mexico! As many of you are aware on January 6, 1912 President William Howard Taft signed a proclamation admitting New Mexico to the union. The Town of Mesilla will continue celebrating 100 years of statehood throughout 2012.

As the town continues to move forward, I am pleased to report that the Town of Mesilla is strong. It is important for residents to know that all departments are making progress. Included in the newsletter is an updated departmental report. Department heads continue searching for funding sources for their departments. A Town Hall meeting to report the Town of Mesilla's progress along with department updates and reports has been scheduled for **Tuesday, February 28th at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center.**

The first week of February we were in Santa Fe meeting with our legislators requesting capital outlay money for the town. We are hoping for capital outlay dollars to be available and that our legislators designate some funding to the Town of Mesilla. In the 2012 Legislative Guide, Senator John Arthur Smith, Chairman of the

Senate Finance Committee, states "Local governments are going to have to realize they cannot rely on state government, i.e. capital outlay. They're going to have to learn to do things differently. We can help, we can assist, but we can't do it for 'em." The town continually is searching for different options to address our capital outlay needs (road repairs/paving/drainage, replacement of water and sewer lines, renovations to kiosko and playground equipment).

We have met with our local business owners and listened to their comments and concerns. Ms. Echavarria, Special Events Coordinator, has compiled notes from this meeting. The highlight of discussion was the promotion of the Town of Mesilla and the webpage. We are discussing different options of promotions and recently appointed a Lodger's Tax advisory board. Once the advisory board meets we can review their recommendations on how to utilize the Lodger's Tax money.

As we begin the preparation of our 2012-2013 town budget, it gives me great pleasure to report that we are financially strong entering this budget year. The last two years of tightening our belts, being financially responsible and making good financial decisions have allowed us to

report the town's reserves twice the amount required by law. Department Heads and Board of Trustees will continue to monitor and be conservative as we prepare our budget and continue moving forward.

Infrastructure improvements continue throughout the town. Phase IV of the Community Center's interior renovations will begin within the next 2-3 months. In the fall we will host an open house to "showcase" the renovations of the community center.

There will always be opportunities for improvement, but when I look at the town's progress over the past 2 years, and the hard work of our residents, council and staff, I am proud of what we have accomplished. I will continue to work honestly and tirelessly along with the Board of Trustees, business owners, constituents and staff to bring issues for discussion and to develop plans that address the concerns and needs of our community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your mayor.

Sincerely,

Nora L. Barraza

Mesilla Recycles

Recycling pick ups take place on the 1st & 3rd Mondays or 2nd & 4th Mondays of each month depending on the street you live on. For a full listing, call the Town Hall at 524-3262, ext. 100.

Recyclable Items

Aluminum	Tin Cans
Newspaper	Clear Plastics #1 & 2
Cardboard	White paper

Attention Residents

Please take the time to clean up your dog litter at Mesilla Parks & the Plaza!

Remember personal trash is not to be put in Town dumpsters!

Town of Mesilla Finance Department

The Town Finance Department works diligently everyday for the citizens of Mesilla and any other person/organization that may need our assistance. All staff members have an open door policy. If there are ever any questions do not hesitate to stop by our offices for help.

Highlights in fiscal year 2011-2012 (FY11-12):

- ✓ The financial audit for FY10-11 has been completed with marked improvement over the previous audit. The primary goal was to have a clean audit report and correct the findings that were associated with the previous audit. Both of those goals have been accomplished.
- ✓ Gross receipts tax revenues, of which the Town of Mesilla is highly dependent on for operations, have been inline or slightly above our budget estimate for the first half of the fiscal year.
- ✓ As always the Finance Department is looking for ways to save money and be as conservative as possible on spending tax payer monies.

Goals for the remainder of the fiscal year:

- ✓ Remain on-track with the approved budget, all departments have been doing a great job staying within their approved budget, I expect that trend to continue the remainder of the fiscal year.
- ✓ Implementation of an online bill payment module has been brought up on several occasions and the Finance Department would like to look into implementing it. Please e-mail me at nickeckert@townofmesilla.org if you think you or someone in your household would utilize on-line bill pay for Mesilla utility bills.
- ✓ Start the FY12-13 budget process in February, with a June approval of preliminary budget and final budget approval in July.
- ✓ Continuing to look at effective ways to invest Town of Mesilla money with the NM State investment pool.
- ✓ Analyzing existing debt in an attempt to restructure/refinance at a lower interest rate for increased savings to the Town.

2012 Mesilla General Election update:

Election day is quickly approaching us and there are a few dates that voters must keep in mind. The first day that absentee ballots can be issued is January 31, 2012. Applications for absent voter ballots can be obtained at the Town Hall from either Gloria Maya or Nick Eckert. February 15th, 2012 is the day that early voting by machine begins. Absentee and early voting ends on the Friday before the election, which is March 2nd, 2012. Finally, Election Day is Tuesday March 6th, 2012.

ELECTION DATES TO REMEMBER

January 31 - First day to issue absentee ballots

February 15 - Early voting by machine

March 2 - Absentee/Early voting ends

March 6 - Election Day

Town of Mesilla Administration & Finance Department (524-3262)

Nora L. Barraza, *Mayor* (ext. 106)

Nick Eckert, *Town Clerk/Treasurer* (ext. 105)

Linda Goff, *Deputy Treasurer* (ext. 114)

Gloria Maya, *Utility Clerk/Receptionist* (ext. 115)

Eva Manzanares, *State of New Mexico Senior Employment Program, Utility Clerk Assistant*
Grace Vance, *State of New Mexico Senior Employment Program, Utility Clerk Assistant*

Town of Mesilla Community Development Department

The Community Development Department in Mesilla is responsible for many functions, including all planning and zoning activities, building plan review, permitting and inspections, subdivisions, and code enforcement. Additionally, the Community Development Department processes all business registrations.

The Community Development

Department interfaces with the public on a continuing basis with frequent inquiries made about zoning, allowed uses, permit processes, etc. As the name "Community" indicates, the community development department works for the community, and always tries to do so in a friendly way.

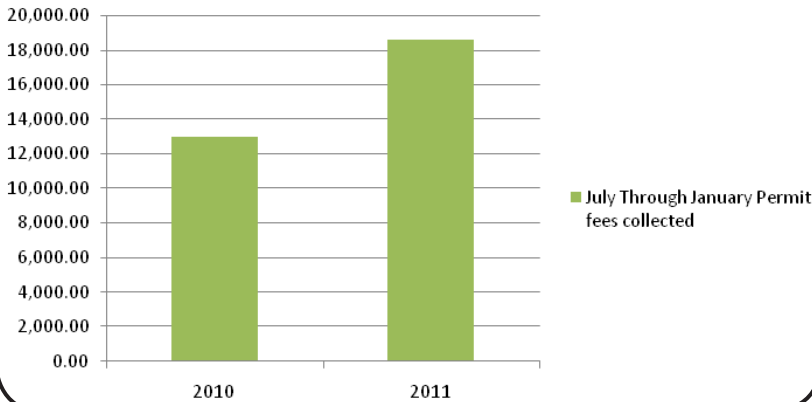
During the last 12 months there have been 132 cases processed of

which there were two subdivisions, four variances, one special use permit, 28 sign permits and the remaining 97 cases were building permits. Additionally there were 31 business licenses issued during the preceding 12 month period.

There were 87 codes enforcement cases that were started with some of the cases proceeding to court action.

Town of Mesilla Community Development Department

Permit fees collected



Building:

The preceding six month period has seen an increase in permit fees collected compared to the previous year. Since the number of permits issued during that time is slightly lower than the previous year, this would indicate that the value of building projects being performed in Mesilla is higher.

Codes:

The codes enforcement process is an ongoing process and will be continuing. The goal of the Town of Mesilla is to work with residents and businesses to preserve and maintain the livability, values and integrity of our neighborhoods. A strong Code Enforcement program has been shown to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods, reduce crime and improve property values. Helping to create a better understanding and knowledge of certain portions of the Municipal Code is one of the goals of the Town Code Enforcement. For this reason, the Town always tries to send a letter or a warning notice of violation to residents and businesses that are in violation of a code, in an attempt to first educate that individual of the code violation. After an initial notice, appropriate action follows, including court action when necessary. Often as a resident, you may see things that just don't seem quite right. When

you notice a problem or have a concern about something that is occurring on private property, please contact the Community Development Coordinator. so that the situation can be investigated and appropriate action taken. If you have a situation on your own property that you are not certain if it is allowed or not, feel free to call and inquire. Codes enforcement is about helping all citizens to comply with these codes assuring that each of us will live in a cleaner, healthier, safer and more organized community.

Upcoming projects in Codes Enforcement will be abatement obstruction of right-of-ways and of course the on-going codes issues will be continued to be enforced, such as inoperable vehicles, trash and debris, and other nuisance violations.

Another type of code violation that occurs is construction work without a permit. Building permits are a very necessary component of a project for the safety and well-being of the property owner as well as to the community. The Town has had two structure fires this year that involved significant damage, due to portions of the building that had performed some type of construction without a permit. Work without a permit can also cost a property owner a lot of money. Not only in double fees on the permit, but also it can be very costly to make a building comply with the building code if it was built with errors, or work was covered and has to be removed in order to allow required inspections. The structure

could even be required to be removed if it violates zoning regulations. For many reasons, any time there is going to be work performed, a permit must be obtained first. Please feel free to contact the Community Development Coordinator at (575)524-3262 ext. 104 for information on what requires a building permit in Mesilla.

Planning:

In addition to permitting and the regular operations of holding planning and zoning meetings, the Community Development Department is also responsible for drafting ordinance amendments to the zoning code, subdivision code and building code. The Historic Preservation Ordinance was revised and updated with the assistance of a grant-funded historic preservation consultant. Whenever it is for the betterment of the citizens of Mesilla, ordinance changes are presented and given consideration and review, and when appropriate, adoption.

Community Development Objectives:

- ✓ Update the Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Provide support to the PZHAC
- ✓ Continue to work on improving customer relations
- ✓ Develop an affordable housing ordinance for Mesilla
- ✓ Complete rehabilitation of one house and apply for additional houses- expand the housing rehabilitation program for Mesilla.
- ✓ Continue to improve upon the codes enforcement process.
- ✓ Accomplish abatement of the majority of codes enforcement issues
- ✓ Receive training updates for building inspections.
- ✓ Improve code enforcement knowledge and possibly receive training

Town of Mesilla Community Development Department (524-3262)

Gina Gentile, *Planner/Building Inspector* (Ext. 104)

Town of Mesilla Fire Department

The last 6 months have seen some significant activity for the Mesilla Fire Department. As many will recall, our hot, dry summer continued with little rain until August. The burn ban and the restriction of aerial fireworks sales played a significant role in preventing fires that would have spread rapidly in the drought conditions surrounding our town. For the most part our citizens were very conscientious about fire safety. Only five citations for illegal burning and 3 fireworks violations were recorded. The fireworks vendors in Mesilla were very supportive of our safety initiatives and this was greatly appreciated.

The Mesilla Fire Department entered into an MOU with the Dona Ana Community College Fire Science Program for use of the classroom at the Public Safety Building. The first Firefighter I class was held this past semester. Mesilla firefighters assisted the instructors with training evolutions for the

students at the station. This was a great training opportunity for all involved. The other advantage for MFD came when 6 of the students completed their class, successfully passed testing at the NM Firefighters Academy in Socorro and joined the department. We are hopeful this relationship will continue to foster our recruitment efforts for members.

Over the last 6 months, the department applied for 3 grants. Our largest application for new personal protective equipment was successful and we received \$38,000 dollars for new gear and to clean and repair our current gear. Our applications for education equipment and an exhaust ventilation system for the station were not funded however we will continue our search for available grants to improve and replace equipment and meet the needs of our firefighters, citizens and visitors of Mesilla.

The department has just finished a recruitment drive and is adding 9 new firefighters to our

ranks. These volunteers passed a rigorous testing process which included physical agility testing, interviews and background checks before being offered membership in the department. Most are already Firefighter I certified and also have their Emergency Medical Technician licenses. Others are attending classes at DACC to obtain their licenses.

2011 saw a decrease in the number of calls responded to by the fire department. In 2010 the department responded to 363 calls for service while in 2011 we responded to 345 calls. This represents a 5% decrease in calls for service. A further breakdown shows an 8% decrease in calls occurring in Mesilla while mutual aid calls (calls to the county and Las Cruces) increased 9%. This decrease is in large part due to the departments continued efforts in business inspections, fire code enforcement and public education in the Town of Mesilla.



Hose attack night training



Ladder training



Pump operations training



Night brush fire training

Town of Mesilla Fire Department (523-1311)

Kevin Hoban, Fire Chief
Harry Evans, Assistant Chief
Chad Zecha, Assistant Chief
Brian Abraham, Lieutenant
Donald Ford, Photographer
Gale Fulte, Chaplain
Gerardo Martinez, EMT/Paramedic

Firefighters:

Andrew Armendariz
Jeffrey Crnkovic
Tony Garces
Gabriel Gil
Michael Graham
Karen Haupt-Dolezal
Richard Hernandez
James Herrera

Monica Monsivaiz
Ricardo Muñoz
Edward Padilla
Mike Pena
Caleb Shell
Tausha Sim
Edward Vasquez

Fire Cadets:

Eduardo Acosta
Juan Arreola
Roman Maese
Wes Nordquist

Alejandro Ochoa
Neil Padilla
Victor Salas
John Stewart

Town of Mesilla Marshal's Department

Recently the Marshal's Department was successful in passing a vehicle seizure/forfeiture ordinance that will allow Mesilla officers to seize and possibly forfeit offender's vehicles. This ordinance will assist the court system by taking away the opportunity for repeat offenders to reoffend by ignoring implemented court orders due to repeat DWI convictions. The vehicles will be housed in a secure location and only released to the registered owner or the fiscally responsible owners.

The Marshal's Office is continuing with the Stonegarden operations as well as DWI saturation patrols with awarded funding for these overtime projects. The Town of Mesilla is

hosting a Safety Restraint class that will allow drivers cited for seat belt violations to attend a class as an alternative to an impact to their driving record. This alternative class can only be awarded through the court with an agreement with the presiding judge. The class will be held once a month depending on class sizes.

The department's School Resource Officer has begun teaching the G.R.E.A.T program at Zia Middle School. The G.R.E.A.T program is a curriculum approved through the Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and deals with the aspect of gang influences and pressures in today's preteen youth.

The department has made

great strides in the professional and positive attitudes of the officers towards the people of the Town of Mesilla and the visiting public but does want to remind people that safety is number one and asks the commuting drivers to please obey the speed limits signs and all school zones because the life you save may be someone you know and love. And as always it only takes 5 seconds to assure your child is safely buckled.

Town of Mesilla Marshal's Department (526-4138)

Jeff Gray, Marshal
Heriberto Flores, Lieutenant
Enrique Salas, Deputy Marshal
Nick Hervol, Deputy Marshal

**Lance Shepan, Deputy Marshal/
School Resource Officer**
Isaac Martinez, Reserve Officer

LOS LEONES DE MESILLA - AN ORGANIZATION WORTH KNOWING ABOUT

Vision Statement:

To be a leader in the community and provide humanitarian service.

Mission Statement:

To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding. Los Leones de Mesilla Lions Club, a non-profit organization, is part of Lions International.

The local chapter raises funds to support projects such as:

- Prevention of Blindness
- Diabetes Awareness
- School Reading Programs
- Special Olympics
- Financial support to local communities for their service oriented projects
- Eye exams and glasses for those in financial need

New Mexico Mission of Mercy Program

This program combines the donated services of dentists, dental hygienists, dental assistants and volunteers to provide clinics to reduce health risks and suffering for those who cannot afford dental care.

March 2 & 3, 2012
Las Cruces Convention Center
Supported by
Los Leones de Mesilla

Town of Mesilla Community Programs Department

There have been several events and programs put on by the Community Programs Department over the past 6 months. The following details highlights of past events.

In celebration of Independence Day, Planet Fireworks with the support of Eddie Binns, put on a firework display for the Town. Additionally, the New Horizons Swing Band performed on the Plaza just as the fireworks were being set off.

The annual Diez y Seis de Septiembre parade and fiesta were huge successes. The theme "A Tribute to Mesilla's Past" provided local Mesilleros with a chance to contribute family photos. A gallery of photos displayed at Yannes Hall commemorated local families and the history of Mesilla. The parade had a total of 31 entries, plus a large group of classic cars and tractors. It also featured Mesilleros 80 years and older as the parade grand marshals, and a float dedicated to past Fiesta queens. The Fiesta included a variety of entertainment, and for the first time in years the Town almost broke even on the expenses, with a loss of just under \$700.

The annual Veteran's Day ceremony was well attended by many. The Disabled American Veterans Chapter 38 played a huge role in the planning of the event. Andele Restaurant also, once again, opened their doors to Veterans to provide a free meal to

say thank you.

December's festivities consisted of the annual Christmas tree lighting, which featured Christmas Carols by San Albino Choir. The annual lighting of the luminarias also took place, as well as smaller events such as Santa on the Plaza, and a 3rd anniversary celebration for the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park.

The Town was happy to be a part of the New Mexico Centennial Parade held in Las Cruces in January. Mesilla Public Works department built a replica of the gazebo and church to represent Mesilla in the Parade.

Recently, the Town of Mesilla has been proud to welcome StoryCorps to the Mesilla Plaza. They will remain on the Plaza through March 5th recording the stories of locals. These stories will eventually be held in the Visitors Center and will be available for the public to listen to.

The tenth annual For the Love of Art celebration took place on the Plaza with 20 local artists displaying and selling their work, as well as music by the Border Jazz Quartet. On that same morning, Community Options held their Cupid's Chase 5k through the streets of Mesilla with close to 300 participants.

Other events that the department was involved in include the Mariachi Sundays, Mesilla Jazz Happening, Los Leones de Mesilla Car Show,

Dia de Los Muertos, and the reenactment of the Gadsden Purchase.

Recreation Programs

The Community Programs Department continues to offer two recreational classes for the public. A children's creative movement and dance class is offered twice a week during the school months to youth in 2nd through 5th grades. This program ends with a dance performance open to the public at the end of each semester.

The Town of Mesilla also offers an adult Pilates class, held year around. For more information on these classes, please contact the recreation director.

The 2011 Summer Recreation Program was very successful with 55 registered attendees. Children participated in a variety of activities from reading, to crafts, sports and more. The 2012 program is currently being planned for June 11 through July 27.

Upcoming Events

April 20-22 - Border Book Festival

April 21 - Great American Cleanup

April 28 - British Car Show

May 5 & 6 - Cinco de Mayo Fiesta

May 16 - Ride of Silence

Town of Mesilla Community Programs Department (524-3262)

Ashley Echavarria, *Special Events Coordinator/Recreation Director* (ext. 116)

For full calendar of events visit www.mesilla-nm.us

Town of Mesilla Public Works Department

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO OUR RESIDENTS/BUSINESS OWNERS:

Lately the Public Works department has been repairing broken water meters due to residents tampering with Mesilla water meters. The Town of Mesilla will be charging the resident/business owner for tampered broken water valves including labor. For any reason a resident/business owner needs to shut off their water please contact the Town Hall at 524-3262 or the Emergency on-call phone number 650-8830. It is my recommendation for residents/business owners to place a shut off valve immediately after the Mesilla town meter if the resident/business owner wants to shut off their own water due to a water leak. The following Mesilla Town Code states;

Mesilla Town Code

Chapter 13.10

Utilities, General Provisions

13.10.140 Interference with municipal utility services equipment

It shall be unlawful for any person not having authority to do so, to open any water hydrant or tamper with any utility service furnished by the municipality to customers, or to in any other way remove, replace, repair, tamper, damage, or trespass upon any equipment or premises belonging to the municipality, or any premises to which the municipality has an easement or right-of-way for any

utility service. [Prior code sec. 10-1-14]

Grant Projects Coming Up for Construction

Calle de Parian:

On Calle de Parian the Public Works crew removed the deteriorated asphalt, graded and compacted the roadway. Be aware that this is just a temporary repair until a permanent repair can be funded, planned and facilitated. The Town has re-routed funds to place asphalt overlay until future funding is received for full reconstruction and drainage improvements on Calle de Parian.

Calle de Guadalupe:

Road improvements on Calle de Guadalupe from the cemetery to Calle Del Norte excluding the Plaza section (Municipal Arterial Program (MAP) Cooperative Agreement Grant). Lift Stations will also be placed on Calle de Guadalupe (Legislative grant).

Community Center:

Construction for the interior renovation of the Community Center (CDBG grant).

Public Works 6 month Progress Report

✓ Public Works crew continuous job duties include routine cleaning and maintenance of the Town Hall, Community Center, Public Safety Building, Plaza, picking-up trash at the parks. As always the crew is reading meters

monthly and monitoring the wells when they are on-call.

- ✓ Fulfilling work orders from residents, tenants, staff, fire and police department
- ✓ Repairing broken bricks around plaza or sidewalks, this task is on-going
- ✓ Repairing potholes
- ✓ Replacing stop signs due to graffiti and signs being run down, this task is on-going
- ✓ Removing dead trees, cactus and bushes
- ✓ Preparing and setting up for all Town events
- ✓ Watering parks
- ✓ Vector Control and testing at several locations
- ✓ Attending scheduled safety training classes

Goals for Public Works

Department:

- ✓ Apply for funding to renovate gazebo/kiosko
- ✓ Apply for funding for new playground equipment
- ✓ Continue applying for funding to replace water lines, sewer lines installed, road repairs and drainage
- ✓ Pay raises for existing employees
- ✓ 2 full time employees
- ✓ Certify all employees in water and wastewater
- ✓ Equipment needed: Dump trailer for all aspects of public works, scissor lift to prune and trim trees, street lights and anything above standard ladder height, roller for roadway patches and a trailer portable generator

**Town of Mesilla Public Works Department (524-3262)
On Call Emergency Number (24/7): 650-8830**

Debbie Lujan, Public Works Director (ext. 103)
Sean Lucero, Foreman (ext. 113)

Public Works Staff:
Felipe Barron
Claude Mauldin
Abel Robles

**TOWN OF MESILLA BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

Board of Trustees

Nora L. Barraza

Mayor

Jesus Caro, Jr.

Mayor Pro Tem

Carlos Arzabal

Trustee

Sam Bernal

Trustee

Linda Flores

Trustee

**Planning, Zoning &
Historical**

Appropriateness

Commission

Dax Contreras

Georgina Ramirez

Priscilliana Sandoval

Kim Seifert

John Sullivan

Great American Cleanup

Help the Town commemorate Earth Day
by helping us clean up the community

MESILLA CLEANUP DAY

Saturday, April 21

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Meet at the Plaza



Call 524-3262 ext. 116
for more information

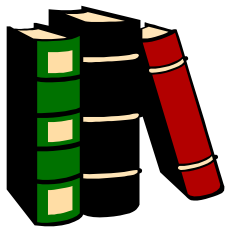
Free shirts to first 50 participants



Keep Up Online

www.mesilla-nm.us

www.facebook.com/oldmesilla



***The Town of Mesilla
supports the Children's
Reading Foundation.
Take 20 minutes a day
to read to a child!***

Town Hall Meeting

**The public is encouraged to attend a
Town Hall Meeting
on Tuesday, February 28, 2012
at 6 p.m. at the Mesilla Community Center**

Town of Mesilla

P.O. Box 10

Mesilla, NM 88046

(575) 524-3262

